



ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

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● ATTENTION 3rd-Year Specialty Trainees And Temporary Administrators

If you were previously qualified and have not yet passed your specialty electrician or administrator examination, you can still take the exams. **You remain eligible for the examination.**

For 3rd-year specialty (unsupervised) trainees the card's expiration date reinstates mandatory supervision for 75% of the working day. If you have not passed the appropriate examination and received your specialty electrician certificate, you must renew as a standard trainee and work under proper supervision by a certified specialty electrician while you perform electrical work as a trainee.

If you are a temporary administrator and have not passed your administrator examination, your "temporary" administrator status expired. The contractor that you were assigned to must obtain a qualified administrator within 90 days. (You may continue to take the examination during this 90-day period and will receive permanent certification if you pass.) If the firm fails to obtain an administrator, the department will suspend the electrical contractors license on the 91st day.

● Our Stakeholders Say Compliance Is Serious Business

The department has recently investigated several firms that have allowed unlicensed electrical contracting firms to work under a licensed contractor's electrical work permit. Buying a permit for an unlicensed contractor is illegal and will not be tolerated. This activity undermines department and industry efforts to create a level playing field for licensed electrical contractors. Administrators and firms participating in this scam against the legitimate industry will be issued citations and may receive a suspension of their certification and/or license.

● Recent Changes To Electrician And Administrator Examinations

Effective January 6, 2003 all questions referenced from WAC 296-24—General Safety and Health Standards have been removed from Section II-Administration and Safety of all administrator examinations. This will reduce the total number of questions in this section of the administrator exams from 30 to 23. The time allowed to complete Section II on all administrator exams will remain at 1-hour.

The current electrical examinations are based on the 1999 NEC. The department will make the transition to the 2002 NEC for exam references shortly after it is formally adopted in Washington. (The target effective date is still late March to early April 2003.) Only a small number of questions and answers in the exam database will actually be added or modified due to the 2002 NEC adoption.

● QuickCards—Internet Renewal Of Electrical Certificates And Contractor Licenses

Since November and average of 50 electrical administrator certificates, electrician certificates, training certificates, and electrical contractor licenses have been renewed each week using the QuickCards on-line system. This is a good way to save some time and money in your busy schedules. Give the new system a try at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/QuickCards>.

● Washington Master Electrician Certification Is Now Available

Many individuals have already been notified by mail that they may be eligible for the new master electrician certification without taking a master electrician examination. To be eligible, the new law requires that (before July 1, 2005) you hold a valid 01 administrator certificate and a journeyman electrician certificate for the previous four years or a valid specialty administrator certificate and matching specialty electrician certificate for the previous two years. Anyone that received journeyman electrician status prior to June 30, 2001 or received specialty electrician status by June 30, 2003 and passes the matching administrators exam may make application before July 1, 2005 to "grandfather" a

master electrician certificate. Individuals who have “temporary” administrator or electrician certification status are not eligible.

The cost of the three-year master electrician certificate is the same (per year) as an administrator certificate. You may choose to keep separate administrator and electrician certificates, but you will have to renew each with separate fees at a higher overall cost. You may have “combination” master specialty electrician certification only if you have matching “combination” specialty administrator and “combination” specialty electrician status.

At the time of your application you must provide 24 hours of continuing education (including at least 8 hours of code update) that have not been previously submitted for certification renewal. If you have recently paid the fees and used the CEU's to renew your administrator or electrician certification, it may be to your economic advantage to wait until later in your renewal cycle (prior to July 1, 2005) before applying to “grandfather” master electrician certification. Applications to grandfather will not be accepted until within 90 days of the expiration of either your electrician or administrator certificate, whichever is first.

● Sample Exams Will Soon Be Available On-line

In an effort to provide exam applicants with additional preparatory material, we will be offering on-line sample exams for candidates. The Electrical Program is in the process of developing sample exams for all candidates preparing to take administrator and electrician exams. When completed, you will have access to the samples from your home computer for a nominal fee from LaserGrade, our exam delivery contractor.

● NEW WAC PROPOSAL-Junction Boxes Cannot Be Concealed By Attic Insulation

New language in the proposed rules [WAC 296-46B-314(2)] makes it clear that “*Conduit bodies, junction, pull, and outlet boxes must be installed so that the wiring contained in them is accessible without removing any part of the building structure, including insulation material.*” You will have to elevate attic junction boxes that are not accessible from standard openings in the ceiling finish, to a visible location above the level of insulation to be installed in the attic space.

● NEW WAC PROPOSAL For Identification Of Disconnecting Means

The National Electrical Code Article 110.22 (2002 Edition) requires that “*each disconnecting means shall be legibly marked to indicate its purpose unless located and arranged so the purpose is evident*”. Proposed rule WAC 296-46B-110 (022) specifies the marking on the disconnect must be an “identification plate.” It also requires “*In other than dwelling units, the identification plate must include the identification designation of the circuit source panelboard that supplies the disconnect.*” The purpose of marking the disconnect circuit source is to aid maintenance personnel when servicing equipment. Identification plates are described in proposed WAC 296-46B-020 (32).

● Electrical Question of the Month

This Month's Question: According to the 2002 NEC, 15- and 20-ampere, 125- and 250-volt receptacles installed outdoors in a wet location where the product intended to be plugged into it will be attended while in use (e.g., portable tools, etc.) shall have an enclosure that is weatherproof when the attachment plug cap is inserted.

A) True; B) False

Last Month's Question: A generator supplying a legally required standby power system must be capable of restoring power within _____ seconds. A) 10, B) 30, C) 60, D) 90.

● **The answer is:** C) 2002 NEC 701.11